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251631Z Jan 06

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 000432

SIPDIS

NSC STAFF FOR SINGH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [IS](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAELI FM TO MAKE EGYPT, FIRST VISIT ABROAD

1. (c) Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni will come to Egypt -- her first official trip outside of Israel as minister-- for a one-day visit February 1 at the invitation of Egyptian Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit. Israeli Ambassador to Egypt Shalom Cohen told Ambassador January 25 that the visit had come about as a positive reaction to Aboul Gheit's well-received congratulatory call to Livni the day after her appointment. In that call Aboul Gheit welcomed Livni and told her that he hoped she would accept an invitation to Egypt as her first trip abroad. Livni will meet President Mubarak and Aboul Gheit and participate in a lunch before returning to Israel the same day. Ambassador Cohen suggested this visit would be kept somewhat low-key (as with previous senior Israeli visitors) but that his hope was that she could return in the near future for a visit with a much fuller schedule.

2. (c) Commenting on Aboul Gheit, Ambassador Cohen noted that the GOI, while finding him somewhat bureaucratic and occasionally arrogant, gave the Egyptian Foreign Minister major credit for working assiduously to implement Mubarak's drive to strengthen the Egyptian-Israeli relationship.

RICCIARDONE